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Morton, John M.

My Wife's second floor.

An original farce.

London.





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My Wife's Second Floor.

FRANK. *Swinging his arms round her, & flinging her arms round him.*

Oh! Sir! I can't speak for joy! I'm so happy---

FOODIE. Holloa! Holloa! what 'before my eyes, I won't allow it.

Act. 1. Scene 10.

MY WIFE'S SECOND FLOOR

An Original Farce

IN

ONE ACT

BY

JOHN M. MORTON, Esq.

(MEMBER OF THE DRAMATIC AUTHORS' SOCIETY)

AUTHOR OF

Lend Me Five Shillings—Little Savage—My Precious Betsy—Where there's a will there's a way—John Dobbs—A most unwarrantable Intrusion—Dying for Love—Your Life's in Danger—Old Honesty—Box and Cox—Trumpeter's Wedding—Done on Both Sides—Thirty-three Next Birthday—Poor Pillicoddy—Young England—Which of the Two—A Husband to Order—Who do they take me for—Double Bedded Room—The Milliners' Holiday—Wedding Breakfast—Brother Ben—Attic Story—Who's the Composer—Who's my Husband—Slasher and Crasher—Prince for an Hour—Away with Melancholy—Waiting for an Omnibus—Betsy Baker—Who stole the pocket-book—Two Bonnycastles—From Village to Court—Going to the Derby—Rights and Wrongs of Woman—Sent to the Tower—Our Wife—Irish Tiger—Ticklish Times—Take care of Dowb—Muleteer of Toledo—Game of Romps—How Stout You're Getting—Aunt Charlotte's Maid—Midnight Watch—Grimshaw Bagshaw and Bradshaw—My First Fit of the Gout—My Husband's Ghost—Barbers of Bassora—Chaos is Come Again—Original—Sentinel—Spitfire—Sayings and Doings—Corporal's Wedding—Cousin Lambkin—Highwayman—My Wife's Come—Mother and Child are Doing Well—Railroad Trip—Thumping Legacy—Friend Waggles—Hopeless Passion—Capital Match—Woman I Adore—To Paris and Back—Whitebait at Greenwich—A Desperate Game—Don't Judge by Appearances—The Three Cuckoos, &c.

LONDON :

THOMAS HAILES LACY.

89, STRAND,

Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market,)

PR 5097
M3 M8

MY WIFE'S SECOND FLOOR.

*First produced at the Princess's Theatre,
Under the Management of Mr. Maddocks,
June 22, 1853.*

CHARACTERS.

CAPTAIN TOPHEAVY, R. N.	Mr. H. WALLACK.
MR. FELIX TODDLE	Mr. WALTER LACY.
JACOB CLOSE	Mr. WRIGHT.
TIM, a Porter	Mr. HARRIS.
MRS. TOPHEAVY	Mrs. H. P. GRATTAN.
FANNY MAYLOVE	Miss EMMA STANLEY.
MRS. DOWNEY	Miss NOEL.

SCENE.—A Lodging House, near Bristol,

COSTUMES.

CAPTAIN TOPHEAVY.—Pilot coat, over an undress naval surtout, blue trowsers and boots, low broad brimmed hat.
TODDLE —Cap, brown blouse, tartan trowsers, black stock, boots. *Second dress*.—A brown coat, with brass buttons.
JACOB CLOSE.—Shabby coloured waistcoat, with black stuff sleeves tied on, apron, brown breeches, blue worsted stockings, shoes.
MRS. TOPHEAVY.—Blue silk dress, white scarf, and white bonnet.
FANNY MAYLOVE.—White muslin dress and pink bonnet.
MRS. DOWNEY.—Brown silk dress and straw bonnet.

TIME IN REPRESENTATION—45 minutes.

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MY WIFE'S SECOND FLOOR.

G. L. Fox

SCENE.—*A Comfortably Furnished Apartment.—Bow window—door at c., and at each side—A small door, L. 1 E.—A table with writing desk, arm chair, &c. &c.—Portmanteau, bandbox, cloak, umbrella, &c.*

MRS. TOPHEAVY *discovered seated at a table, L. writing.*

MRS. T. That'll do, vastly well. (*holding up a large card on which is written, "Second Floor to let, Furnished."*) I'm sure there isn't a more desirable second floor in all Bristol. Bow window, with a view of the Market place and the Pump—within five minutes walk of that cheerful lounge, the cemetery—the use of the back kitchen and coal cellar—and though last, not least, a convenient little back staircase (*pointing to door, L. 1 E.*) for folks to make their escape by, when folks they don't wish to see are coming up the other.

Enter JACOB CLOSE, C., dressed as a servant of all work of a lodging house, with boot and brush.

Well, Jacob, have you executed all my commissions?

JACOB. Yes, ma'am. Firsto—I've taken one inside place in the "London Telegraph." Secundo—I've taken your luggage to the coach office; and thirdo—I know—I've put the advertisement about the lodgings into the newspaper. (*repeating*) "Second floor to let, furnished. A widow lady about to leave Bristol—"

MRS. T. A widow lady, Jacob?

JACOB. In course. Ain't you a widow?

MRS. T. To be sure—that is—Jacob Close, can you keep a secret?

JACOB. I'll keep anything you give me, ma'am.

MRS. T. Jacob, I'm a physiognomist, and I haven't looked into your fine expressive features for the last six weeks, without saying to myself "That is a man to be trusted."

JACOB. Then I wish my butcher and baker were physiognomists! But, as you say, ma'am, I *am* a man to be trusted, and right proud I am of it. I haven't cleaned the windows, beat the carpets, run the errands, and polished the boots and shoes of this lodging house for the last fifteen years, without seeing a good deal. (*significantly*)

MRS. T. And you never informed?

JACOB. Me! I defy any one to say I ever gave 'em any information. No, no—only say to me "Jacob, mum's the word," and Jacob's as dumb as an oyster. Eyes open—mouth shut; that's my motto. Why, I once found a guinea in a gentleman's boot, and I never said a word about it.

MRS. T. Then, Jacob, I'll trust you with a secret. I've imposed upon you. I am not a widow.

JACOB. What! you've got a husband—a live husband?

MRS. T. If I may be allowed to be a judge of the matter, I have. Captain Topheavy, of the Royal Navy.

JACOB. And yet you come down here, take our second floor, and pass yourself off as a widow!

MRS. T. I did. Listen, Jacob. On the very morning fixed for our departure for Bristol, a vacancy occurred in the command of Her Majesty's steam ship the "Hurlyburly." Top determined—

JACOB. Who's Top?

MRS. T. Top—for Topheavy. Top, I repeat, determined to apply for the appointment, and sent me down to Bristol alone—promising to join me as soon as possible. During the journey I reflected, and, at the end of it, determined to assume the title of widow, as a safeguard against those trifling, but by no means disagreeable attentions to which an unprotected woman—still in the bloom of youth, and by no means devoid of personal attractions—is always liable.

JACOB. But, ma'am—why doesn't Top for Topheavy come down, as he said he would?

MRS. T. Because he's obliged to kick his precious heels at the Admiralty from morning till night. That's his only chance of getting the "Hurlyburly." Here is his last letter—received this morning. (*reads*) "To Mrs. Topheavy. London, Monday—Wind, South West, by South half South. My precious Fanny! how goes it? As for me, I feel quite at sea without you—like a ship without compass or rudder." That's tender, Jacob!

JACOB. Very!

MRS. T. (*reads*) "The likeness you sent me of your lovely figure head is the only thing that keeps me afloat." That's poetical Jacob!

JACOB. Very!

MRS. T. (*reads*) Without it I should founder—shiver my timbers!"

JACOB. Poetical again!

MRS. T. (*reads*) "Your affectionate husband, for ever and ever, Amen,—Tristram Topheavy." Now, Jacob, to my mind that letter says, as plain as can be,—“Fanny, dear, as I can't come to you, do *you* come to me”—and that's why I've made up my mind all of a hurry to let my second floor, start for London, and give my dear Top an agreeable surprise. Poor fellow! you see how pleased he is at my sending him my picture.

JACOB. No wonder—it was a picture! I can't say much for the face, but the bonnet and shawl were wonderful like.

MRS. T. But, Jacob, how did you know that Mr. Toddle was so clever an artist?

JACOB. Bless you, I have it from the best authority—he told me so himself!

MRS. T. Has he much practice in his profession?

JACOB. Practice! I believe you! he's always at it. Why, he ain't had our attics a fortnight, and there isn't an inch of wall that ain't covered with men and dogs, and poll parrots, and women, and cats, and other domestic animals. (*a tap heard at c. d.*)

MRS. T. Come in! (*the door is slightly opened, and a hand appears, holding a card*)

JACOB. It's Mr. Toddle, madam. He's in his working dress, and he's ashamed to show himself. (*takes card, and shows it her*)

MRS. T. (*reading card*) "Mr. Felix Toddle, historical, landscape, portrait, and animal painter to the Emperor of all the Russias, and the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of Bristol." Over leaf, in pencil, "F. T. requests the honour of a few minutes' conversation with Mrs. Topheavy." Certainly—desire Mr. Toddle to walk in.

JACOB. Come in, Mr. Toddle.

TODDLE *appears, c. d., and seems shy of entering.*

Don't be shy, sir! (*pulls TODDLE into room*)

MRS. T. (*to JACOB, as he goes out*) Jacob, mum!

JACOB *puts his hand to his mouth, and exits, c.*
Good morning, Mr. Toddle.

TOD. You are not offended at my appearing before you in this costume? (*he is dressed in an artist's blouse, very much daubed with paint, &c.*)

MRS. T. Oh dear, no.

TOD. (L.) Oh dear, no! You're aware it's a liberty—a considerable liberty—in short, ma'am, a liberty which you might very properly resent.

MRS. T. (*laughing*) Oh, well, I will resent it, if you wish it.

TOD. Not on my account, I beg—I merely mention it to put the thing in its proper light, that's all.

MRS. T. I assure you I am happy to see you.

TOD. Are you? Then, most blooming of widows, I'm your most devoted. What a splendid full face you've got. (MRS. TOPHEAVY *turns aside*) Charming side view! (MRS. TOPHEAVY *turns round, with her back towards him*) Back view, not bad! If you'll allow me, I'll— (*takes out sketch book, and begins drawing*)

MRS. T. (*turning round*) What's the man about? Why what have you got there?

TOD. This? My sketch book, ma'am; I'm never without it. When anything strikes me, down it goes. See, ma'am—that's the street door opposite—that's the knocker—no, it isn't—that's the housemaid, taking in the tea and sugar from the grocer's boy—that's the grocer's boy,

hanging on the railings—no that's his basket. Ah, here's an old friend I'm sure you'll recognize—our Tom cat. He came and sat to me yesterday, for an hour and half.

MRS. T. Well, I declare, it's very like; but I don't see his tail.

TOD. He was sitting on it, ma'am, all the time.

MRS. T. I beg pardon, Mr. Toddle; but I'm rather pressed for time.

TOD. I see, you consider my visit an intrusion. Well, ma'am, as I'm bound to put the thing in its proper light, it is an intrusion.

MRS. T. (*angrily*) No such thing, I tell you!

TOD. There's an expression! (*hurriedly opening sketch book, and beginning to draw*)

Here JACOB enters, c., pretending to look for something, but trying to overhear the conversation.

MRS. T. (*knocking the book away*) You asked to see me—here you are—here am I, and now, what do you want?

TOD. A favour, an enormous favour.

MRS. T. Of me?

TOD. Of you! and if you'll only listen—

MRS. T. (*impatiently*) If you'll only speak—

TOD. I will! Ahem! A gentlewoman of this good city of Bristol has expressed a wish to be transferred to canvass—in other words, is coming to sit to me for her portrait.

MRS. T. An old lady, Mr. Toddle?

TOD, (*hesitating*) Why—

MRS. T. Elderly?

TOD. Why—

MRS. T. Middle-aged?

TOD. Why—

MRS. T. Young?

TOD. Why, there, or thereabouts! (*turns round and sees JACOB stuffing his sleeve into his mouth to prevent his laughing*) Holloa! what do you want?

JACOB. Didn't you call, sir?

TOD. No, I did not!

JACOB. Very well, sir. It's a mistake, sir—you needn't apologize.

Exit, c.

MRS. T. I think I understand you, Mr. Toddle. The enormous favour you want to ask of me, is the loan of my second floor, because you are ashamed to receive the lady in your attic. Is that it?

TOD. It is. You've a remarkable knack of putting things in their proper light. And now, ma'am—my dear ma'am—your answer; yes, or no?

MRS. T. No!

TOD. That's to the point. I wish you a very good morning. (*going*)

MRS. T. Stay, Mr. Toddle. When I say no, I mean that my second floor is not to be *lent*, but to be *let*.

TOD. To be let?

MRS. T. Yes—I am about to leave Bristol at four o'clock, for London, and if you like to take my apartments until I return—

TOD. Oh—what, keep them aired for you?

MRS. T. No—become my tenant. What say you?

TOD. I should be delighted—enchanted! But, as I am bound to put the thing in its proper light—I am only a poor painter—a very poor painter—I mean, in a pecuniary point of view—

MRS. T. We shall not quarrel about terms, Mr. Toddle, I dare say—and so I look upon you as my tenant. (*crosses L.*)

TOD. (*aside*) Well, at any rate, I shall be able to receive my dear Fanny in a genteel second floor, instead of a miserable attic.

MRS. T. My luggage is already gone to the coach office, and I've only to take a few papers out of my writing desk. (*she goes to desk, and takes out a roll of papers*) Here they are—and now, Mr. Toddle, consider yourself at home.

Enter JACOB, C.

JACOB. (*aside to TODDLE*) She's come!

TOD. She! who?

JACOB. The young lady—your young lady—Miss Fanny Maylove.

TOD. Hush! where is she?

JACOB. Down stairs. The front parlour's gone to market, so I asked her in there.

MRS. T. Oh, Jacob, you needn't put the advertisement about my second floor into the newspaper again—Mr. Toddle has just taken it. Good bye, Mr. Toddle—take care of my—(*crosses c.*) furniture. I've a few visits to pay before the coach starts—

TOD. Allow me to see you to the door.

MRS. T. Thank you—(*giving him a carpet bag*) you're so very polite—(*giving him a bandbox*) I'm really quite ashamed. (*putting umbrella under his arm*) Now, then, I'm ready! (*flinging her cloak over TODDLE'S shoulder*) Come along, Mr. Toddle!

TOD. (*aside*) Now, then, for my darling Fanny! (*offers his hand to MRS. TOPHEAVY*)

MRS. T. (*turning round to JACOB—aside*) Jacob—mum!

TOD. Jacob, snug's the word!

They exeunt, c., holding up their fingers to JACOB.

JACOB. (*shaking his head*) Um! so Mrs. Topheavy gives up her second floor to Mr. Toddle! Very kind of Mrs. Topheavy—very! Pleasant for Captain Topheavy—very! It would be really kind in me to open Top's eyes—but I won't! No, no—I never blabbed yet, and I'm not going to begin now—not even if it should come to bigamy.

TIM *enters at door, L. 1 E., carrying a portmanteau.*

TIM. (*looking cautiously about him*) All right—nobody here!

JACOB Don't be too sure of that.

TIM. Hush!

JACOB. (*up stage, on R.*) He's at it, too! Don't be afeard. If you were a housebreaker, I'd scorn to mention it!

TIM. A lady lives in this second floor, don't she?

JACOB. What if she does?

TIM. Her name's Topheavy, ain't it?

JACOB. What if it is?

TIM. (*very mysteriously*) He's come!

JACOB. He! who?

TIM. Her husband—Captain Topheavy. But you mustn't say a word about it. It's a secret, that's why I tell you.

JACOB. Ah!

TIM. He got off the box of the "London Highflyer," not five minutes ago—went into the bar, called for grog and a glass of porter—no, I mean he called for a porter and a glass of grog—tipped me a wink and a five-shilling piece, and told me to bring his portmanteau here, and, if possible, without anybody seeing me—because, d'ye see, he's come down from London on purpose to give his wife, Mrs. Topheavy, an agreeable surprise.

JACOB. No!

TIM. Yes!

JACOB. Ha, ha, ha! capital!

TIM. Isn't it? I say, look here—(*putting down portmanteau, L., and taking a red morocco case out of his pocket*) this is another of the old gentleman's traps. It's his wife's picture—and he told me to be very careful of it, and stow it away somewhere. Where shall I put it? Oh, here's the very thing. (*opens desk, puts in case, leaving desk open*) And now, old fellow, that I've told you all about it, of course you know nothing!

JACOB. All right!

TIM. Good bye! and recollect, don't say nothing to nobody.

Exit L.

JACOB. Ah! now I'll be bound that if Mrs. Topheavy knew that her husband was come down from London to take her by surprise, she wouldn't go up to London, to do the same by him. It's a long journey for nothing, and it would really be a charity in me to stop her, but I won't! And then when Captain Topheavy does come—finds Mr. Toddle making himself quite at home in his wife's second floor, there'll be a rumpus, as sure as my name's Jacob. To be sure, it would be the easiest thing in the world for me to explain matters, but I won't! No, no—there's but one thing for me to do, and that is, to see everything, hear everything, and know everything, and say—nothing!

Enter FANNY MAYLOVE and MRS. DOWNEY, C.

FANNY. (R.) I tell you, Mrs. Downey, I can't be mistaken. I'm certain I saw Felix Toddle turning the corner of the street, with a female under his arm.

MRS. D. (L.) Well, what of that? Perhaps it's his mother—

FANNY. Nonsense! how should he have a mother? Oh, if I thought Felix was deceiving me, I'd take my scissors and cut every one of his pictures to ribbons, that I would.

JACOB. (*aside*) She's jealous of Mrs. Topheavy! ha, ha! Poor soul! jealousy's a terrible thing, and I could soon make her quite easy and comfortable, but I won't. No, no!

Enter TODDLE, C. D.

TOD. Ha, my dear Fanny! (*to JACOB*) Jacob, abscond!

JACOB. Yes, sir. (*aside*) There'll be a row—there'll be a devil of a row. To be sure, I could prevent it, but I won't. No, no—eyes open, mouth shut—that's my motto.

Exit, C. D.

TODDLE. (C.) My dear Fanny!

FANNY. (*coldly*) Sir—

TOD. Sir, what is the matter?

FANNY. I think Mr. Toddle might have been at home to receive me—especially as it is my first visit.

TOD. My darling Fanny, I merely stepped out to sniff the fresh air—

MRS. T. (*aside to him*) And take your aunt home!

TOD. (*taking the hint*) And take my aunt home.

FANNY. Your aunt? I never heard of her.

TOD. No! (*aside*) No more did I. (*aloud*) Oh, yes Aunt Jones—Uncle Jones's widow.

FANNY. (R) How silly of me, to be sure! I declare I felt quite jealous. But you forgive me, Felix?

TOD. Fanny, I do! (*aside to MRS. DOWNEY*) Downey, you are a knowing one! (*aloud*) And so, Fanny, you have at last ventured upon paying me a visit in my own apartment.

FANNY. Yes, and a delightful second floor you've got—everything in such apple pie order, too, for a bachelor, (*examining arm chair—screams*) Ah!

TOD. What's the matter now?

FANNY. A needle and thread stuck into the back of the chair.

TOD. The devil! (*crosses to her*)

FANNY. (L., *putting her finger to her mouth*) The very thing I should like to have said, if I had dared. How did it come there, Mr. Toddle?

TOD. (*bothered*) Why, I imagine it came there, simply because it was put there.

FANNY. Who by—who by—who by? (*impatiently*)

MRS. T. (R.—*aside to TODDLE*) Aunt Jones.

TOD. Aunt Jones! the stupid old creature is always sticking her needles into the chairs. (*aside to MRS. DOWNEY*) Downey, you're a deep one.

FANNY. Ah, these aunts and uncles are very convenient sort of people *at times*.

TOD. I wish I could say as much for your old curmudgeon of an uncle—who, with a spirit worthy of a red Indian, insists on your becoming the better half of a man old enough to be your grandfather, without an idea beyond almonds and raisins, and sevenpenny moist.

FANNY. (L.) Now really, Felix, you are too severe upon poor Mr. Spicey!

TOD. (C.) Poor Mr. Spicey! rich Mr. Spicey, you mean. Why don't you boldly declare that you have bestowed your affections on a more interesting object.

FANNY. I told my uncle so this morning, and he said he'd cut me off with a shilling.

TOD. Well, a shilling's better than nothing—that's sixpence a-piece, you know. But have you no other relations.

FANNY. No; but I have a dear, kind godfather.

TOD. Go to him! you know he promised to do something for you.

FANNY. Yes, but I haven't seen him since I was christened. I have made every possible inquiry after him, but without success.

Enter JACOB, C., with shovel of coals and tea kettle.

TOD. And consequently, your old ruffian of an uncle takes advantage of your unprotected state, to bully you into becoming Mrs. Spicey! I execrate that man. I repeat, Fanny, Spicey is the object of my execration—and if you should hear of his being found, one of these mornings, smothered in one of his own treacle tubs, don't be astonished. (*JACOB sidles in at C., during the above as before, gradually getting nearer and nearer, till TODDLE turns round and sees him—he seizes him*) What the devil are you doing here? does anybody want me?

JACOB. Yes, sir!

TODD. True! I remember! the old lady from next door, isn't it?

JACOB. Yes, sir! she wants to know what you charge for painting her poodle dog.

TODD. What sort of an animal is it?

JACOB. Oh, rather a genteel old lady.

TODD. Pshaw! zounds, you rascal! why didn't you tell me all this at once?

JACOB. Me? a likely matter, indeed! just as if I was going to say anything about it!

TODD. Pooh! Fanny, excuse me—business, you know, must be attended to—I'll be back in a minute. *Runs off, c.*

FANNY. Mrs. Downey, I haven't an atom of curiosity, but I *should* like to know what sort of a character Jacob would give Mr. Toddle—suppose we draw him out? Jacob!

JACOB. Ma'am!

FANNY. (L.) Mr. Toddle seems a very steady young man. (JACOB *looks up at her*)

MRS. D. (on the other side) Perhaps not quite so steady as he looks—eh, Jacob? (JACOB *same play*)

FANNY. Doesn't keep late hours, I'll be bound? early to bed, and early to rise, eh! (JACOB *same play*)

MRS. D. Except when he has company. (JACOB *ditto*)

FANNY. A few gentlemen, perhaps, occasionally, but no ladies—I say no ladies, Jacob? (JACOB *ditto*)

MRS. D. Of course not—the ladies write to him—don't they, Jacob? (JACOB *as before*)

FANNY. Not they! Jacob, I'm sure, never takes in any little three-cornered notes, sky-blue paper, do you, Jacob? (JACOB *as before*) Hasn't the man got a tongue in his head?

MRS. D. Is the creature dumb?

(JACOB *looks at them alternately—begins to whistle—turns round, and walks out at c.*)

FANNY. None are so dumb as those who won't speak! There's something wrong depend on't. (*crosses to R.*)

MRS. D. Then it's our duty to find it out. So I'll begin by searching this writing desk. (*opens it and takes out miniature—looks at it*) Oh, Fanny!

FANNY. What is it?

MRS. D. Toddle's a wretch! Look here!

FANNY. A woman's portrait! I don't know the face, but I'll swear to the bonnet! It's the very identical one I saw as we came in, through the parlour window, turning the corner of the street with Mr. Toddle. Downy, support me! No, don't—I'll be majestic in my misery! I'll tear his eyes out—I'll marry Mr. Spicey to-morrow morning! (*crosses to and fro*) I'll—here he comes—not a word.
(*crosses R.—puts miniature in her pocket.*)

TODDLE *enters*, C. D.

TODD. A thousand pardons, my dear Fanny!

FANNY. Pardons! what about?

TODD. Why, my leaving you.

FANNY. Did you leave me, eh? oh, ah, true—I believe you did. And how have you been since I last saw you?

TODD. Last saw me! what three minutes ago?

FANNY. True, true! I declare I quite forgot. But really, one can't be expected to remember every trivial, commonplace occurrence of one's existence.

TODD. (C.) Commonplace, Miss Fanny!

FANNY. How the man stares! ha, ha, ha! Downy, suppose we (*crosses C.*) call on dear Mr. Spicey, and take a drive in his new green barouch? It is always at my service; and to me there is nothing so enchanting as lolling back in one's equipage, and doing the amiable to one's poor acquaintances. How do? how d'ye do? how d'ye do? (*motioning her hand patronizingly to TODDLE*) Good bye, young man. (*going—they get round table to C.*)

TODD. But, Fanny, my dear!

FANNY. Silence, sir! (*turning sharply round to him*)

TODD. Will you explain?

FANNY. Ask your own conscience, sir, if you have one.

MRS. D. (*pulling him round to her, R. C.*) Yes, young man, ask your conscience!

FANNY. (L. C., *pulling him round*) Confess, sir!

MRS. D. (*pulling him round*) Yes, sir, confess!

TODD. Confess? I do—what?

FANNY. That you're a wretch! (*pulling him round*)

MRS. D. (*pulling him round*) A hypocrite!

FANNY. A deceitful, good-for-nothing monster!

TODD. Goodness gracious! what have I done?

FANNY. Search your apartments, Mr. Toddle—search them thoroughly, Mr. Toddle—and you'll know what you have done—and you'll also know that you're found out—and you'll confess, sir, that I am justified in saying what I do now—that I never wish to see your horrid, false, good-for-nothing face again! *Exit C. to L.*

Mrs. D. Oh, Toddle! Toddle! *Exit after FANNY, C. to L.*

TODD. But, Fanny—pooh! I won't stand this—I will be heard! Fanny, I say— *Runs off after them, C. to L.*

The door L. 1 E. opens, and CAPTAIN TOPHEAVY appears.

TOP. The coast seems clear, so in I go! (*enters*)
Huzza! here I am, actually in my wife's second floor, without a soul knowing I am in Bristol. But where can my darling Fanny be? Gone to market, perhaps. Egad, how agreeably surprised she'll be when she comes and finds her own dear hubby seated comfortably in this arm chair. (*sits*) I can fancy her astonishment, ha, ha, ha!

Enter TODDLE, C. from L., out of breath.

TODD. (R.) Wheugh! Wheugh! it's no use, Fanny sticks to what she said before—"search your apartments—search them thoroughly!" What can she mean? There's nothing here! (*looking about, then under the table, &c.—at last he sees TOPHEAVY in the chair—he taps him on the shoulder*) I say, old 'un, you're making yourself at home, whoever you are.

TOP. Well if you come to that, you don't stand upon trifles, whoever you are.

TODD. I don't know whether you've heard the observation before, but as its rather to the point, I beg to observe, that every Englishman's house is his castle—in other words, be off.

TOP. Harkye, young man. Between you and me, the chances are about five hundred to one, I'm getting into a thundering passion.

TODD. Pooh, for your passion. Will you, or will you not leave my apartments?

TOP. Your apartments? ha, ha, ha! (*aside*) I see! the fellow's either mad, or he means this for a joke. (*aloud*) Sir, you may be a very funny fellow in your way, but a

joke may be carried too far, and when I tell you I am come here to see a lady—

TODD. A lady! What's her name?

TOP. Well, 'pon my life, you're a cool sort of chap, but I don't mind indulging your curiosity—her name is Fanny—my own Fanny.

TODD. Your Fanny? ha, ha, ha! (*aside*) I've a horrible misgiving. It can't be anybody else—age, person, all correspond. It must be my odious rival—it must be old Spicey! It must be he. Damn it, here goes. (*aloud*) Sir!

JACOB. (*is seen to walk slowly past the open door at c., trying to overhear*) The row's beginning!

TOP. Well, sir?

TODD. You're discovered! No prevarication, old man—I say you're discovered!

TOP. (L.) Oh, what you guess who I am, eh?

TODD. I *know* who you are—I know all about you—your birth, parentage, education, and occupation—and I also know your absurd pretensions to the affections of my Fanny.

Here JACOB sneaks in, and getting behind one of the folding doors, which he closes upon himself, looks out occasionally.

TOP. Your Fanny? (*aside*) D—n his impudence!

TODD. Yes, sir—*my* Fanny. I love her, adore her, and what's more, I'll have her in spite of you—in spite of your money—in spite of your new dark green barouche—in spite of your almonds and raisins—in a word, old Spicey—

TOP. Old Spicey! What the devil—(*aside*) I don't half like this. Two men in love with my wife! I begin to feel very uncomfortable.

TODD. Come, Spicey, take my advice. You haven't a leg to stand on—so be off.

TOP. Not till I have seen Fanny. (*crosses to and fro*)

TODD. Don't be obstinate. I tell you Fanny doesn't care a fig about you. She told me so not five minutes ago.

TOP. (*furious*) Pooh, pooh! I don't believe a word you say.

TODD. Very well—then I'll convince you. I'll bring Fanny here, and she shall tell you so to your face. Stop where you are—don't attempt to run away—stop where

you are, I say! (*seizes TOPHEAVY's hat—much too big for him—puts it on, and runs off, c. to L.*)

TOP. My mind misgives me! It'll be some time before I attempt an agreeable surprise again. Fanny faithless? it can't be—and yet—ha! (*sees JACOB*) Come here! who are you?

JACOB. Jacob Close.

TOP. What are you?

JACOB. Servant of all work.

TOP. Where?

JACOB. Here.

TOP. That'll do. My name's Topheavy—the husband of Mrs. Topheavy. Now, tell me, who's that brazen-faced young reprobate that just went out? (*JACOB looks up at him*) What's his name? (*JACOB looks again*) Speak, you rascal, or I'll shake you to pieces. (*shaking him*)

JACOB. Shake away, you won't shake anything out of me.

TOP. You're in the conspiracy, too, you villain! But farther concealment is useless. He told me—told me to my face he was in love with Fanny—d'ye hear, with Fanny! (*shouting*) My wife's name is Fanny.

JACOB. (*aside*) And Miss Maylove's name be Fanny, too, ha, ha, ha! Now if I was to tell the old gentleman that, he'd be quite happy and comfortable, but I won't, no, no!

TOP. Will you speak, you villain, or will you not?

JACOB. Well, I don't mind telling you all I know.

TOP. And what do you know?

JACOB. Why, I know nothing. He, he! You thought I was going to blab, did you? No, no, I've a soul above tittle tattle.

TOP. I shall go mad! No, I won't, I'll go to London, send for my lawyer, allow Mrs. Topheavy a separate maintenance, find out my long neglected god-daughter, settle every shilling I have upon her, and then take a flying leap off Waterloo-bridge. Oh, Fanny, Fanny! (*JACOB laughs*) Stand out of my way!

Puts on TODDLE's hat, and rushes out L. 1 E.

JACOB. He, he! I knew there'd be a rumpus. Things are getting into a nice mess. To be sure, I could soon set 'em right again, but I won't, no, no!

TODDLE. (*without*) This way, madam, this way!

Enter TODDLE, FANNY, and MRS. DOWNEY, C. from L.

FANNY. Mr. Spicey here? The thing's impossible.

TODD. I tell you he *is* here, and there he stands. No, he doesn't! (*looking about*)

FANNY. For shame, sir! this was a poor paltry artifice to induce me to return here.

TODD. No such thing. I tell you I saw him—spoke to him. Ah, Jacob, where's Mr. Spicey!

JACOB. (*aside*) He takes Captain Topheavy for Mr. Spicey, he, he! here's another row.

TODD. You must have seen him.

JACOB. I never see nothing.

TODD. Ugh! no matter. (*to FANNY*) You know you told me to search my apartments—I did so thoroughly, and I repeat I found Spicey.

FANNY. No such thing, sir. You found that I had discovered the undeniable evidence of your attachment to another woman.

TODD. Me?

MRS. D. Yes, the little red morocco case, sir.

FANNY. The miniature, sir, fie! fie!

TODD. Haven't the most distant notion what they mean.

JACOB. (*aside*) I could tell you easily enough, but I won't.

TOPHEAVY. (*without*) Jacob! Jacob!

TODD. Ah! Spicey's voice!

TOPHEAVY. (*without*) I want my portmanteau!

TODD. Portmanteau? (*sees it*) There it is, sure enough. Ha, ha! I'll take it to you, my fine fellow. Stay where you are, ladies, I'll bring the gentleman back with me—and if he won't come back by fair means, I will drag him up stairs by the hair of his head.

Seizes the portmanteau, and runs off, L. 1 E.

FANNY. (*alarmed*) Oh, Jacob, run and prevent mischief—perhaps there'll be bloodshed.

JACOB. I shouldn't wonder! (*aside*) And to think that one word from me would settle everything to everybody's satisfaction—but I won't speak, no, no! (*Exit JACOB L. 1 E., hurried by MRS. DOWNEY, who follows him—FANNY is anxiously looking off at door, L. 1 E—Enter TOPHEAVY, C. from L.*

TOP. On second thoughts, I'll see the perfidious Fanny once again, before I leave her for ever. She's coming up the street, so I'll in here, and then appear and confound her.

Exit into room, R. D.

FANNY. (*looking off, L. 1 E.*) Why, I declare—no—yes—it is a female in the identical bonnet I saw this morning. She's coming up the stairs—if I could but see her face. Ah! there, I caught a glimpse—it's she herself! the original of that odious miniature. So this is my rival! this is aunt Jones, is it? very well. (*retires, L.*)

Enter MRS. TOPHEAVY, C. from L.

MRS. T. How very provoking to be sure! I quite forgot to give Mr. Toddle the key of the cellar! (*sees FANNY*) This must be the lady that's come to sit to Mr. Toddle for her portrait. (*aloud*) I presume, madam, we are both waiting to see the same person?

FANNY. I'm afraid we are, ma'am. (*aside*) Saucy minx!

MRS. T. (R.) I'm sure you'll be pleased with your portrait, ma'am, whenever it is finished—and I do think a tiny little miniature in a tiny little red morocco case, such a charming present to give the man of one's heart, don't you, ma'am?

FANNY. (*bursting out*) Don't be impertinent, madam!

MRS. T. Impertinent!

FANNY. (L.) Yes, yes! I know all about you—Aunt Jones! (*satirically*)

MRS. T. Aunt Jones? the young woman's a maniac! Who are you, madam?

FANNY. Your rival! Yes, madam—your rival in the affections of the most false—fickle—perfidious, and perjured of his sex!

MRS. T. Mercy on us! (*aside*) Thoughts by no means flattering to Tristram Tophheavy are busy in my bosom! (*aloud*) Why, you don't mean to insinuate—

FANNY. I scorn to insinuate—I tell you to your face that the “man of your heart,” as you call him, has sworn, over and over again, that he loves me to distraction—and, moreover, that that tiny little miniature—

MRS. T. Well? (*alarmed*)

FANNY. In that tiny little red morocco case—

MRS. T. Well?

FANNY. Which you gave him—

MRS. T. Well?

FANNY. Is now in my possession. There—there!
(*showing the miniature to her.*)

MRS. T. (*taking the miniature*) Oh, oh, oh!

FANNY. Oh! (*sobbing in each other's arms*)

MRS. T. I'm sure I feel for you, that I do! (*they embrace, and weep*)

FANNY. I'm sure I sympathize with you, as you must of course, resign your pretensions.

MRS. T. I would if I could, but I can't. I'm married to him.

FANNY. Married!—you? Then let me marry him too, and then we'll transport the wretch!

MRS. T. You're very kind, but—

FANNY. Ah! then you're *not* married to him, or you'd jump at such a chance.

MRS. T. But I tell you I am! I ought to know better than you.

FANNY. It's no such thing! I *must* know better than you.

MRS. T. Take care, young woman, or you'll put my back up! It's no joke to put my back up!

FANNY. Don't think to frighten me, ma'am! If we were men, I should demand satisfaction!

MRS. T. Then let us *act* like men! Name your time!

FANNY. Whenever you please.

MRS. T. Weapons?

FANNY. Whatever you choose.

MRS. T. The place of meeting?

FANNY. Wherever you like.

MRS. T. I'll be there.

FANNY. So will I. Swords?

MRS. T. Swords.

FANNY. Or pistols?

MRS. T. Pistols be it. Here on the spot?

FANNY. As you please—or behind the barracks?

MRS. T. Whichever you please.

FANNY. Just as you like.

MRS. T. Then swords on the spot.

FANNY. Agreed! Pistols behind the barracks.

MRS. T. I see, you prefer pistols behind the barracks.

FANNY. And you're determined on swords on the spot.

MRS. T. I am, and won't give way.

FANNY. No more will I.

MRS. T. I admire your spirit. Then I shall be here with swords on the spot.

FANNY. And I shall be with pistols behind the barracks.

BOTH. Agreed! (*shake hands*)

FANNY. And then, having satisfied my honour, I shall marry Mr. Spicey—you hear, madam? I'm determined to marry Mr. Spicey. (*aside*) She'll be sure to tell Felix, and he'll be miserable—that'll be some comfort. *Exit, c.*

MRS. T. Spicey! What can she mean? Who can she mean? Ah, I see it all. Topheavy, alias Spicey—and under that fictitious name, my wretch of a husband has seduced this young woman's affections, and sacrificed my peace of mind, and my portrait. Oh, Top! Top! what a rod in pickle I have got for you, and when we *do* meet—

Here TOPHEAVY, who has entered from door, R., presents himself before her in an attitude—arms akimbo, &c.

Topheavy!

TOP. Stands before you, in all the dignity of offended manhood!

MRS. T. Topheavy, it's no use trying it on—it won't do—you look the very picture of remorse, you do!

TOP. Remorse! Indignation, you mean. And now, madam, have you anything to say?

MRS. T. Lots! Look at me, sir—do you know one Mr. Spicey?

TOP. (*aside*) Upon my soul, that's a cool question! Her morals must be in a sad state of dilapidation! (*aloud*) Yes, madam, I know the villain—and what's more, I know your partiality for him.

MRS. T. My partiality! Oh, dear, no! I liked the fellow well enough once, I'm ashamed to say.

TOP. And well you may be!

MRS. T. But now I feel I hate him!

TOP. You do! and why?

MRS. T. You know.

TOP. 'Pon my life I don't! Has he deceived you?

MRS. T. You know he has!

TOP. I tell you I don't. Never mind—he must be punished.

MRS. Yes—I'll take care of that.

TOP. No—be that my task—Spicey dies!

MRS. T. No—repent, Tristram Topheavy. Don't make away with yourself.

TOP. Make away with myself!

MRS. T. Of course. You're Mr. Spicey!

TOP. Am I?

MRS. T. You know you are!

TOP. (*aside*) Well, as there seems to be but one opinion on the subject, I suppose I am!

MRS. T. Come, sir—no prevarication. You understand me.

TOP. Why, there is but one thing which prevents my understanding you, thoroughly, and that is, that I haven't the most distant idea what you mean!

MRS. T. For shame! my portrait, sir—where is it, sir? Give it to me, sir!

TOP. What, in order that you may make a present of it to your youthful admirer!

MRS. T. My youthful admirer!

TOP. Yes, the dashing young man with the dark brown curly hair—ah!

MRS. T. (*aside*) Can't conceive what he means, (*aloud*) Well, sir, why not? At any rate, he has as much right to it as your poor deluded victim.

TOP. My deluded victim!

MRS. T. Yes, sir. The thin young woman, with the dark brown ringlets—ah!

TOP. (*aside*) Don't understand a bit! (*aloud*) Well, madam, as you say, why not? I adore slim young woman with dark brown ringlets. There's one for you!

MRS. T. And I doat upon dashing young men, with dark brown hair. There's one for *you*!

TOP. There's but one thing to be done. I propose an immediate separation.

MRS. T. And I claim a separate maintenance!

TOP. Agreed! We'll have the deeds drawn up instantly, and share the expenses. I'll find pens, and ink, and paper!

MRS. T. And I'll run for the lawyer. *Runs off, c. to L.*

TOP. Now, then, to bring matters to a crisis.

(*sits at table, opens writing desk, and begins pulling things out of it.*—Enter TODDLE, L. D. 1 E.

TODD. Holloa! what's old Spicey at now? (*crosses behind to opposite side of table, and giving it a shake*) I say, sir—

TOP. Well, what do you want?

TODD. What do I want? (*shaking table again*) Why, I want to know how dare you rummage my writing desk about? (*violently shaking table*)

TOP. Your writing desk!—your apartments — your Fanny! Zounds, sir, I don't feel inclined to stand this sort of thing any longer!

TODD. No more do I, sir, if you come to that!

TOP. In a word, young man, I am Captain Tristram Topheavy, the husband of Mrs. Topheavy!

TODD. Ha, ha! Come, 'pon my life, that isn't a bad idea of yours. (*patting him on the shoulder*)

TOP. What do you mean?

TODD. Why, I see but one objection to your being the husband of Mrs. Topheavy, and that is, that the lady in question happens to be a widow—ha, ha! so try again, Captain Tristram Topheavy—ha, ha!

FANNY. (*at C. D., overhearing*) Did I hear right? Captain Tristram Topheavy—my dear godpapa, that I never hoped to meet again. (*aloud, and running to TOPHEAVY*) Oh, sir, I can't speak for joy—I'm so happy—so—(*flinging her arms around TOPHEAVY*)

TODD. Holloa! holloa!

FANNY. What! won't you give Fanny Maylove a kiss?

TOP. Eh—what? Fanny Maylove, my own little Fanny! Come to my arms!

TODD. (*getting between them*) Before my eyes! Pooh, pooh! I won't allow it!

TOP. Get out of my way!

FANNY. Yes, young man, get out of my way! (*TOPHEAVY and FANNY embrace.—Enter MRS. TOPHEAVY, R. followed by JACOB.*)

MRS. T. Bravo! bravo! Oh, it's too much—support me! (*falling into TODDLE's arms*)

TOP. Zounds, I can't stand that! (*drags TODDLE away*)

JACOB. (*aside*) Here's another row!

MRS. T. Never mind, I'll be revenged!

TODD. So will I. We'll both be revenged, widow!

TOP. Widow! pooh! she's not a widow!

MRS. T. I wish I was!

TOP. There—there's a pretty speech to make to a husband!

TODD. (to MRS. T.) What! is old Spicey your husband?

TOP. Spicey be d—d! I tell you I'm Captain Tristram Topheavy, this infatuated female's husband—

FANNY. (L. C.) And my dear, dear godpapa!

MRS. T. Your godpapa! (*crosses, c.*) Oh, do say it again! Then this likeness of me—(*showing miniature*)—which my Tristram gave you—

FANNY. He didn't give it me at all—I found it in that writing desk, and thinking it belonged to Mr. Toddle—

TOP. But why—*why* should you think it belonged to Mr. Toddle?

FANNY. Why, this being his second floor—

TOP. *His* second floor! You mean my wife's second floor.

MRS. T. No such thing! I let it this morning to Mr. Toddle. (to FANNY.) So then, after all, it is Mr Toddle that loves you to distraction?

TODD. Of course it is!

TOP. Then you're not in love with my wife?

TODD. Of course not.

TOP. And she's not your Fanny?

TODD. No, this is my Fanny. (*they embrace*)

TOP. Ha, ha! Huzza! then its all right after all!

ALL. To be sure it is.

JACOB. Oh! so you've found that out at last, have you? Why. I could have told you this an hour ago. He, he, he!

TOP. Then why didn't you, you rascal?

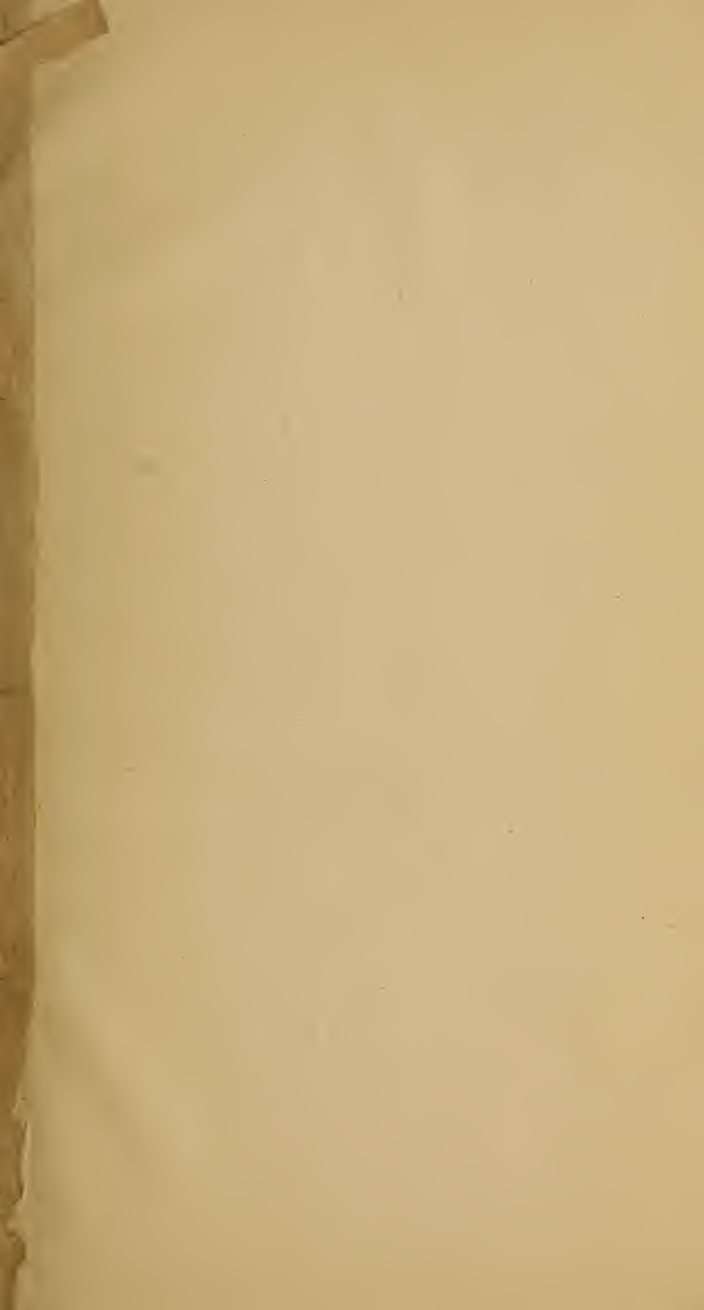
ALL. Yes, why didn't you?

JACOB. Me! Just as if I was going to say anything about it. No, no. You don't know me—but I flatter myself you do. (to the AUDIENCE) Did I ever give you any information? (*a pause*) I thought not. Ain't I a man to be trusted? (*a pause, and look*) I thought so. Then take example by me, and if, in spite of our endeavours to amuse anything should have gone wrong, be like me, Close, and don't say a word about it!

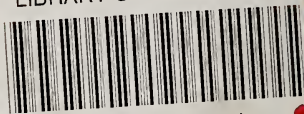
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